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Record crowds

LOS ANGELES, California June 25: World Cup crowds are on course for an all-time record for the tournament with an average of 66,744 spectators watching the first 17 matches, reports AFP.

The previous highest aver age was 60,772 for the 22 games at the 1950 tournament in Brazil.

Official figures from FIFA correct to the end of Thurs day's games -show 1,134.645 fans watched the first 17 of the 52 games in the USA.

Italia '90 holds the record total with 2.4 million specta tors - average 46,182 - but that will be smashed with 3.6 million tickets having been sold this time.

The two highest attendances have been at the Pasadena Rose Bowl - the stadium which will host the final on July 17 - with a 93,194 crowd for the USA versus Colombia game and 91,856 for Cameroon against Sweden.

Only the Nigeria versus Bulgaria game in Dallas, which was watched by a 44,132 crowd, pulled in under 50,000 spectators.

OFFICIAL ATTENDANCES

Germany v Bolivia (Chicago) 63,117 South Korea v Spain (Dallas)

56,247 USA v Switzerland (Detroit) 73,425

(New York) 74,826 Colombia v Romania (Los Angeles) 91.856

Italy v Republic of Ireland

Belgium v Morocco (Orlandol 60.790 Norway v Mexico (Washing-

ton) 52,395 Cameroon v Sweden (Los

Angeles) 83,959 Brazil v Russia (San Francisco) 81,061

Holland v Saudi Arabia (Washington) 52.535 Argentina v Greece (Boston)

53,486 Germany v Spain (Chicago) 63.113

Nigeria v Bulgaria (Dallas) 44.132 Romania v Switzerland (De-

troit) 61,428 USA v Colombia (Los Ange-

les) 93,194 Italy v Norway (New York) 74.625

South Korea v Bolivia (Boston) 54.456

Total: 1,134,645. Average: 66,744.

Mistrysted mirth

MEXICO CITY, June 25: Mexican soccer fans clashed with police in central Mexico City on Friday as tens of thousands poured onto the streets to celebrate their country's 2-1 World Cup defeat of Ireland. reports Reuter.

Witnesses said that, despite a steady drizzle, about 20,000 fans decked out in the country's green, white and red colours brought the capital's main avenue to a standstill around the monument to the Angel of Independence.

Chants of "Mexico, Mexico' and "Visas" for Luis Garcia scorer of both goals in Mexico's first round win in Orlando, mingled with the sound of firecrackers and music as fans congregated within minutes of the final whistle.

The mood changed when police arrived and were met by a hail of bottles, stones and other missiles.

There was no immediate word of any arrests or injuries. "They almost overturned my car," said one frightened man who was driving past on

his way back to work in the nearby financial markets area. Mexico lost their opening match 1-0 to Norway but Fri-

day's win left them top of Group E with one game to go.

Eire look beyond setback

DUBLIN, Ireland, June 25: Thudding back to earth as their heroes wilted in the Florida sun, 1reland's soccer fans remain optimistic about moving ahead in the World -Cup, reports AP.

Ireland, who started with a 1-0 victory over Italy, lost 2-1 to Mexico on Friday.

"Not the end of the world." said a front-page headline in The Irish Times on Saturday.

also made up of more panels than most other makes which "We're still in with a chance," said the Irish Indeexaggerates the amount of pendent. swerve in the air.

Hosts ready for Romanians

and have not been beaten in

their last seven games - the

second longest undefeated

streak since the United States

started playing international

Milutinovich is expected to

name an unchanged side, his

opposite number's plans are

always unhappy that Romania

would be forced to change

time zones by moving from the

west coast to Detroit for the

on Friday when he refused to

discuss his team selection, tac-

tics, or injury problems when

reached by telephone at his

I have no news for you. I

have no news for anyone," he

said. "You will find out every-

thing on Sunday. I have noth-

decided on the team yet."

ing to say now. I have not even

The only thing that is cer-

tain is that Ion Vladoiu, who

was sent off just three minutes

after coming on as a substitute

against Switzerland, will miss

the match. He received a

three-match ban from FIFA on

twice in their 3-1 win over

Colombia, said the team

blamed themselves for the

subsequent loss to the Swiss.

"Everyone knows we can do

better, and we intend to do

just that against the

Raduciolou, who scored

He was still in a sour mood

Coach Angel Iordanescu was

While US coach Bora

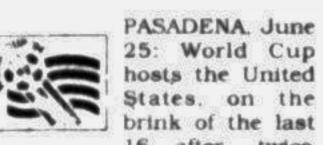
soccer in 1985.

Swiss match

hotel room

Thursday.

shrouded in secrecy.



States, on the brink of the last 16 after twice upsetting the form book, are ready for a Romanian backlash

in their final Group A match on Sunday, reports Reuter. "We know exactly what we have to do," said US defender Marcelo Balbos. "Romania will

be smarting after the way they folded (4-1) against Switzerland

"They will be desperate to make up for that against US



TONY MEOLA

and we will not be able to take our eyes off them for a sec-

With four points from their first two games, the Americans are as good as in the second round, but Romania are still in contention with three points and could win the group if they beat the US and Colombia defeat Switzerland.

With players of the calibre of Gheorgie Hagi, Florin Raducioiu and Ilie Dumitrescu Romania would appear to be far too strong for an American squad with little international

pedigree. But with the US having drawn with the Swiss and beaten Colombia, and with 90,000 American supporters screaming them on at the Rose Bowl, the host nation could produce another major upset.

US captain Tony Meola was under no illusion of the task ahead of his team when he said on Friday: "Our victory over Colombia and Romania's loss to Switzerland on Wednesday does not mean we are automatically going to win this one.

"But I'm pleased we're going into the match with a draw followed by a win, rather than they way they are coming into it, with a win followed by a

Group A has been the most surprising of the six so far. with Switzerland heading the stands with four points, ahead of the United States on goal difference.

"You could say we've surprised a few people about that," said US defender Alexi Lalas. "I don't think too many people thought we would be going into the game looking to top the group. To be honest, I am not sure we did either."

The Americans go into the match having won their last four games at the Rose Bowl

DALLAS, June 25:

A revolutionary

new soccer ball is

making goalkee-

pers' jobs a lot

tougher because

it swerves as violently as in the

thin air at the 1986 World Cup

Thorstvedt says the ball

swerves more than any he has

played with and veers unpre-

dictably at the last moment.

making goalkeeping much

harder than at previous World

their Questra ball makes it fly

faster than other balls, giving

goalkeepers less time to react.

cember and being used in all

1994 World Cup matches, is

The ball, unveiled in De-

Adidas say new material in

Norwegian goalkeeper Erik

in Mexico, reports Reuter.

Americans," he said.

PROBABLE TEAMS

United States: 1-Tony Meola, 5-Thomas Dooley, 17 Marcelo Balboa, 20-Paul Calligiuri, 21-Fernando Clavijo. 22-Alexi Lalas, 6-John Harkes, 9-Tab Ramos, 16-Mike Sorber, 8-Ernie Stewart, 11-Eric Wynalda.

Romania: 12-Bogdan Stelea: 2-Dan Petrescu, 3-Daniel Prodan, 4-Miodrag Belodedici, 6-Gheorghe Popescu, 14-Gheorghe Mihali, 5-lonut Lupescu, 7-Dorinel Munteanu, 10-Gheorghe Hagi, 9-Florin



G HAGI Raducioiu, 11-flie Dumitrescu.

Referee: Mario Van Der Ende (Netherlands) Kickoff: 2005 GMT.

New role for Garcia, new life for Mexico



ORLANDO, June 25: A shrewd positional switch paid dividends for goal-scoring midfielder Luis

Garcia and for the Mexican team on Friday when they beat Ireland 2-1 in their World Cup Group E clash at the Citrus Bowl, reports Reuter.



LUIS GARCIA

Garcia, 25, who plays for Spain's Atletico Madrid, scored both goals with wellstruck shots from the edge of the penalty area and afterwards explained how his move from the left to the rights of the Mexican attack had helped.

"I like my new position. I feel quite comfortable on the right and I enjoyed it. I feel suited to it," he said.

Garcia, who together with left-sided midfielder Alberto

Questra, goalkeepers' gall

"I would expect the goal-

keepers to be a little dis-

mayed, but the strikers to be a

lot happier with this ball,"

company spokesman Tommy

little bit more quickly than

some goalkeepers are used to

and therefore give them less

like a ball at high altitude," he

added. "So it will behave like

those in the thin air in the

pace when struck violently be-

cause of their new high com-

pression rapid response

the ball gives the player more

power in shots. It's not lighter,

but it feels lighter, like at high

altitude, which gives the shot

more energy," said Kain, Adi-

das's soccer sports manager in

"The energy return from

Adidas say the ball has more

1986 Mexico World Cup."

polyethylene foam.

time to react.

"The ball is going to move a

"This ball behaves exactly

Kain told Reuters on Friday.

striker Luis Roberto 'Alves' Zague provided the inspiration for the Mexican attack, salvaged Mexico's hopes of a place in the second round with his goals. "It's extremely exciting for

Garcia Aspe and left flank

us," he said. "This performance showed the great sacrifice made by out team. Now we have to face the future and we hope we can go far." Asked about Ireland man-

ager Jack Charlton's comments about the heat and its part in his team's downfall, Garcia said:

"Jack Charlton is always complaining and the conditions are the same for all of us. I am feeling fine now." He praised Carlos Her-

mosillo's part in Mexico's victory after the striker had come into the attack as a replacement for veteran star Hugo Sanchez. But he added: "Hugo is a

great player and a great leader. but today we needed a lot of mobility and spirit."

Garcia joined Atletico Madrid in 1991, following closely in the footsteps of Sanchez who had moved there 10 years earlier at the start of a long and successful career in Spanish soccer.

"We played with a lot of dynamism and strength," Garcia said of Mexico's performance against Ireland. "We showed great determination to win and we could have scored more goals."

America, based in Portland,

"But so long as it's consistent and the same for all teams then that was all FIFA was concerned about." He credits the Questra for

the stunning goal scored by American Eric Wynalda in their opening 1-1 draw against Switzerland. Wynalda's free-kick curled

over the wall and into the uppermost corner of the net. "When Eric Wynalda scored

with his free-kick against Switzerland, it was because of the ball and maybe that's a good thing for everyone except the Swiss," he said. "It is lively and I would say

that when the ball was coming at me when it was struck hard then I would be a little bit put But Kain denied there was

any unusual late movement from the ball.

Rowdy party!

HUNTINGTON PARK. Calif. June 25: A street party celebrating the World Cup soccer tournament turned rowdy leading to minor looting and the arrest of one man after a sheriff's deputy was struck by a car, authorities said Saturday. reports AP.

Eighty law officers were needed to quell the two-hour disturbance, which started about 11 pm Friday, said Los Angeles County Sheriff's spokesman Deputy Gabe Ramirez. Deputies along with officers

from six communities moved in when some in the crowd of approximately 5,000 began stopping traffic and blocking streets in this community about eight kilometres (5 miles) southeast of downtown Los Angeles, Ramirez said. The windows of three to

four businesses were smashed and some looting was reported. Some police officers reported being struck by rocks and bottles, Ramirez said. After being asked to dis-

perse, some in the crowd drove through the area in caravans and continued to block streets. The vehicles were stopped one at a time and the drivers were ordered out of the area. One deputy was struck by a

Nadequ Street. The deputy held on to the vehicle to avoid being thrown under its wheels. Ramirez said. The deputy, who was not identified, was taken to a hos-

pital with a badly bruised el-

bow and thigh. He was treated

car at Crockett Boulevard and

and released, Ramirez said. Luis Julio Centano, 18, was arrested for investigation of assaulting a peace officer with a deadly weapon.

It's a mathematical problem!

DALLAS, June 25: Mexico's 2-1 win over Ireland on Friday put all four teams in World Cup Group E equal on points and goal difference - bu sme were left more equa! than others, reports Reute...

Under World Cup competition rules Mexico are top, Ireland second, Italy third and Norway bottom even though all four have won and lost one match each by a one-goal mar-The difference between

them is not purely academic because it will affect how teams approach their final group match. Mexico and Ireland can be

fairly sure of qualifying for the second round with a draw next Tuesday while their respective opponents, Italy and Norway, must look for victory

In the round-robin group matches positions are decided first on points and then on goal difference.

If the first two criteria fail to separate any of the four nations, the number of goals scored comes into play Mexico and Ireland go anead with two goals each since the Italians and Norwegians have netted only one.

The final tie-break is the direct match between the teams involved so Mexico's win over Ireland puts them top and Italy's 1-0 victory over Norway on Thursday keeps the three times world champions with their heads just above wa-

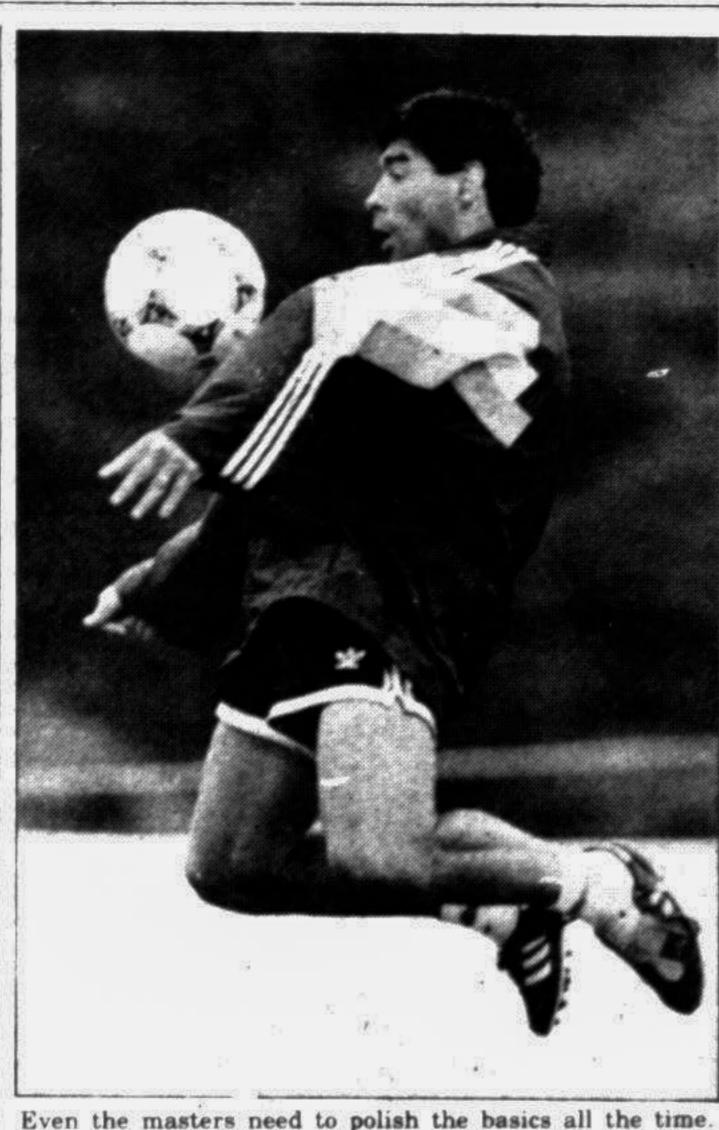
FIFA ca ethankful Mexico did not beat the Irish 1-0. That was the score in the other three group matches and it would have left all four teams exactly level after using up all the devices used to split them.

That would have opened up the risk of both final matches ending in a tie by an identical score and leaving FIFA to draw lots to determine who finished first, second, third and fourth.

FIFA has said it hoped to avoid such a scenario, though it was forced to draw lots four years ago in Italy after Ireland and the Netherlands finished exactly level in second place in Group F.

Both qualified for the next round but Ireland got lucky when fate determined they would be second and the Dutch third. . The Netherlands then had

to go on to a tough second round match with West Germany, which they lost, while Ireland reached the quarter-finals after an easier game against Romania.



Diego Maradona is about to chest-trap a ball during Argentina's training session at the Babson College ground on June 24 ahead of the Group D match against African — AFP photo champions Nigeria.

WORLD CUP DIARY

LOS ANGELES, June 25: Friday's World Cup diary:

ON THE BANDWAGON

US football officials, used to labouring in obscurity, are a bit nonplussed by the attention heaped on the team after their historic 2-1 victory over Colombia.

Assistant coach Steve Sampson said he had been hearing football news on at least one radio station that never covered the game before.

"It was a station that never, ever talks about soccer," he said. "They played the highlights of the game and then God bless America, give me a break."

HOOLIGANS IN HIDING

Security officials at the 1990 World Cup were prepared for the worst in football hooliganisms, but there has been little trouble so far.

At the first two matches in Detroit's Silverdome, with a combined attendance of 1,34, 853, there has been just one

"It has been like a pyjama party," said one Silverdome offi-

PACKING THEM IN

Total attendance for the first 17 matches of the World Cup was 1,134, 645, according to official figures released by organisers.

The biggest crowd so far was the 93,194 who saw the United States beat Colombia 2-1 in the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, site of the July 17 final.

NIGERIAN'S GERMAN MOVE BLOCKED

Emmanuel Ammunike's 800,000-dollar move to German club Duisburg has been blocked by his Egyptian club Zamalek who are expecting better offers after the Nigerian's goalscoring start to their World Cup campaign in the 3-0 win over

Ammunike helped Zamalek win the African Champions' Cup last December and club official Abdel Aziz Qabil said: "We have decided to wait until after the World Cup because there are bound to be better offers from European clubs."

CUP FANS CHILL OUT

Fans and players are beating the heat at sweltering World Cup venues with the help of "cool zones," shower-like devices that spray a refreshing mist.

As many as 90 spectators can crowd under one of the devices, which look like big shower stalls and spray a fine, chilled mist. The misters have also been installed behind the team

benches at eight of the nine World Cup venues, and outside for fans at New York, Dallas, Orlando and Los Angeles. The company that makes the misters said they were originally developed to keep farm animals cool.

MASTER OF ALL HE SURVEYS

sion was unusual, but he had done nothing wrong.

FIFA officials are defending Scottish referee Leslie Mottram's decision to add on so much injury time at the end of South Korea and Bolivia's scoreless Group C match. FIFA secretary general Sepp Blatter said Mottram's deci-

"The referee is master on the field and the master of time," said Blatter.

Mottram, a 43-year-old school teacher, has been named to referee the Nigeria v Greece Group D match next week in Boston.

GOAL TOTAL UP

After 17 World Cup matches 41 goals had been scored. more than in the same number of matches in Italy four years ago. Strikers account for 24 of them and midfielders have scored 14 goals. In a break down of when goals have been scored FIFA report most of the scoring has come just before half-time and just after. FIFA's figures reveal that attacks down the right are having most success with 11 goals. Attacks down the left have only produced five goals.

US HYPE DELIGHTS FIFA

FIFA officials are delighted with America's stunning win over Colombia. "We are on the front pages in the American press," said FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter on Friday. US organisers report that after 17 games, over 95 per cent of the stadiums were full. ABC say some 18 million people watched the US-Colombia match, more than watched the US Open golf championship.

Boca want

WELLESLEY, Massachusetts, June 25: Diego Maradona said on Friday he had heard that Boca Juniors, the club he helped to win the 1981 Argentine Championship, want him to play for them again. reports Reuter.

want me, that Algre wants me," Maradona said, naming the club's president Antonio Alegre

my country, but after that there is that blue and yellow shirt I love so much." the Argentine added, referring to Boca's colours.

would like to end his career at Boca Juniors, but he said he preferred to handle his latest comeback step by step

Nigeria.

couldn't even get a contract the Argentina captain joked.

vice-president Carlos Heller, who was at Argentina's practice at their World Cup base near Boston, denied the club had made any approach to Maradona for him to play for them after the tournament. "Now is not the time."

Maradona has had little club football in the last year, since his sacking by Spain's Sevilla

last June. He had a brief spell at Newell's Old Boys in the Rosario club in February. offer from Bolivian league runners-up Bolivar to play six

dollars. Maradona said Argentina's clash with Nigeria is a key match. "They have a good team. If we win we'll ratify

All the better for Nigeria's adrenalin

DALLAS, June 25: Nigeria got a second boost from the World Cup finals on Friday when FIFA announced the African nation would host next year's World Youth Cup, re-

ports Reuter. FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter said Nigeria had provided government guarantees on telecommunications, hotels, stadiums and security

World soccer's governing body provisionally decided last year to award the finals. scheduled to open on March

Nigeria, winners of the last World Youth Cup and African Champions at senior level, won their opening match at the World Cup finals 3-0 against

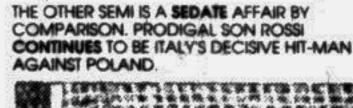
Nigeria's tournament organiser chief Serbastian Babatunde Williams said the competition would be staged in Lagos. Ibadan, Kaduna and Enugu.

Haiti under

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti. June 25: Caretaker Prime Minbefore the tournament ends

"This country is demobilised by the World Cup," Malval said. "I think when we wake up on July 18, that's the end of the World Cup party, that will be the beginning of the end of the party here."

of them worried the United States might invade, jammed the capital's airport to get on the last flights out of Haiti Friday before a ban on air traffic with the United States takes effect at midnight.

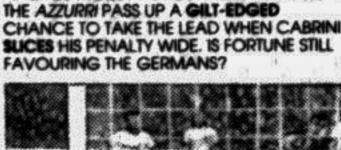




ADVANCE TO THE FINAL HAS MADE THEM UNPOPULAR. THE VASTLY-IMPROVED

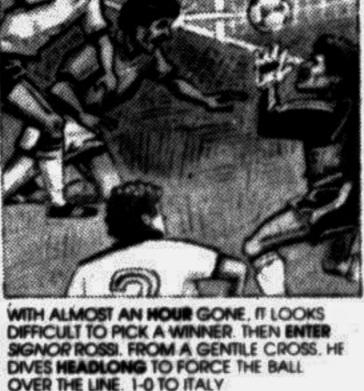
ITALIANS WILL ENJOY THE MAJORITY OF THE

BACKING IN THE MAGNIFICENT BERNABEU



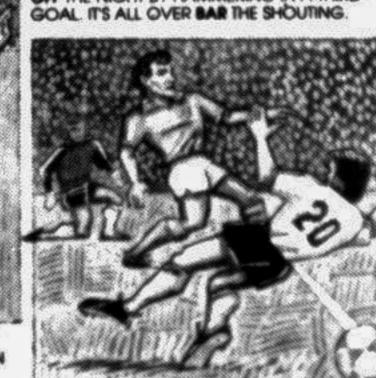
AFTER 25 HIGHLY-FORGETTABLE MINUTES,





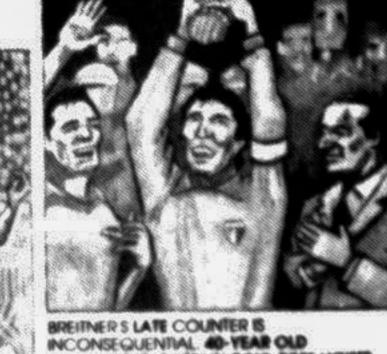






NINE MINUTES FROM TIME ALTOBELLI ROUNDS

OFF THE NIGHT BY HAMMERING IN A THIRD



GOALKEEPER-CAPTAIN DINO FOFF HOISTS THE CUP A SIGHT WHICH HAD LOOKED DECIDEDLY UNLIKELY THREE WEEKS EARLIER

Maradona?

Tve just heard that Boca

"The biggest thing I have is

Maradona has often said he "Let's go in stages - first

the national team," said Maradona, who on Saturday equals the record 21 World Cup finals appearances in Argentina's Group D clash with "Three months ago I

with the local district team." Alegre's number two, Boca

Heller said.

Argentina but was sacked by He still has to reply to an South American Liberatadores Cup Club Championship matches for one million US

what we did against Greece."

during talks in Dallas this

11, to Nigeria pending satisfactory guarantees.

Bulgaria on Tuesday.

WC spell

ister Robert Malval said Friday that Haiti was paralysed by World Cup soccer mania and few, if any, changes were likely July 18, reports Reuter.

Hundreds of people, many

The ban is aimed at pressuring Haiti's military leaders to cede power and allow exiled president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to return.